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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 000505

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FOR G/TIP, INL/HSTC, AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2016

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT UNION OF DOMESTIC LABOR OFFICES (KUDLO)  
CLOSED ON A TECHNICALITY

REF: KUWAIT 42

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (C) The Municipal Council closed down the Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO) headquarters on February 7th. (Note: KUDLO, an independent association of offices that hire out domestic laborers, aims to systematize the domestic labor sector in Kuwait. They were on the verge of opening the first Kuwaiti-run shelter (which will include legal services) for domestic workers (ref A). The shelter would be housed at the current KUDLO headquarters. End Note.) Hashim Maged, the General Manager, told PolOff that the Municipality closed KUDLO's office because it was in a residential neighborhood and did not have a commercial license. According to Maged, they had never had any problems before. Maged said he explained to the Municipality that the organization is licensed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL) and is not a commercial enterprise, to no avail. Maged has no doubt that this closure is purely the result of a personal feud: Maged said he had "blacklisted" Municipal Council official Suleiman Al-Mukaimi from hiring domestic employees from India due to Al-Mukaimi's maltreatment of previous employees.

¶2. (C) Although Maged was upset -- he told PolOff: "we're trying to help poor people get their rights, and we can't even get ours" -- he thinks this is more of an annoyance than an existential threat. He says he will open the back door of his headquarters/shelter and continue to operate. In the meantime, he is optimistic that his ongoing communications with the Municipality will resolve the matter. If the Municipality insists on the closure, however, he said he will simply move his operation to another location where the lack of a commercial license cannot be used as a pretext for the closure of KUDLO.

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LeBaron